



Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee

Date: January 13, 2020

Time: 8:15 AM – 9:30 AM

Location: 112 Mystic Street, Arlington Police Department, 2nd Floor Community Room.

In attendance: Adam Chapdelaine, Ezekiel Wheeler, Kien Ho, Bill Schwartz, Heather Barber, Mike Rademacher, Darcy Devney, Alyson Fletcher, Jenny Raitt, Kelly Lynema, Daniel Amstutz, Doug Mayo-Wells, Julie Wayman, Ali Carter, Linda Butt, Len Diggins, Kristine Shah, Rachael Stark, Erin Zwirko, Matt Smith, Phil Goff (via phone).

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions.

STPAC members introduced themselves to staff from Nelson\Nygaard and BETA group.

2. Approval of Minutes from December 16, 2019.

Minutes were approved.

3. Overview of Work Plan and Scope of Work.

Dan Amstutz introduced Matt Smith from Nelson\Nygaard, who introduced the project team and described the scope of work for the project. Smith will be the project manager, with Bill Schwartz, a Principal of the company, providing QA/QC on data analyses; Alyson Fletcher will serve as the Deputy Project Manager; Dan Berez will provide transit expertise; and Kien Ho of BETA Group will address safety issues and recommendations for how to modify Arlington's streets.

Nelson\Nygaard will hold a project call every other week with Town staff to discuss project updates, outreach and engagement efforts, and brainstorm solutions. There are four scheduled meetings with the Sustainable Transportation Plan Advisory Committee (STPAC), including the kick-off, which will comprise of a presentation of existing conditions, strategy development, and two discussions about the development of the plan.

The town will be the primary initiator of community engagement, with Nelson\Nygaard advising on materials, branding, and data, as well as planning mobile workshops to bring components of the plan to the community.

Smith provided an overview of Nelson\Nygaard's approach to the project by project phase:

- Existing conditions analysis: this will begin with selecting key studies and projects that have been completed to determine what has already been agreed upon. They will be researching how people travel within and across Arlington, identifying points of conflict/crashes in town, analyzing the bike, bus, and pedestrian networks, and looking for ways to build on plans and network improvements to create systems of mobility. The product of this phase will be an Existing Conditions Fact Book.
- Develop core principles and establish baseline metrics that will serve as the foundation for the plan. Nelson\Nygaard will work with the STPAC to define the key metrics that the town should be tracking.
- Prioritization and strategy development: Nelson\Nygaard will present and work with STPAC to prioritize strategies that will make Arlington safer and improve all forms of mobility throughout town. Components of this will include: curbside management, transit access, prioritizing other forms of mobility (e.g. bus priority lanes), social service planning and coordination with neighboring communities, emerging mobility, identifying how to reduce car trips to reduce greenhouse gases and improve community health, ground truthing data to understand how personal experiences inform changes in data, and rethinking the roadway. Nelson\Nygaard's framework for the plan is to layer existing conditions, short-term improvements, partnerships to be identified, and major networked investments to be made.

4. Project Schedule.

Smith presented the project schedule, noting the four meetings to be held roughly quarterly with the STPAC, and explaining that the mobile workshops will likely be held in early fall.

5. Discussion: Project Goals and Outcomes

- Amstutz noted the need to have a good study of transportation and socioeconomic data in the existing conditions, similar to the Factbook Nelson\Nygaard created for Newton, to support the concept of 8-80 cities and the transportation needs of the elderly population.
- Kristine Shah said she will share results of the Council on Aging's age-friendly survey and also noted there is a subcommittee partnering with other towns on elderly transportation.
- Len Diggins said 1) he wants the public involved early in the process; 2) the fact book should include appendices of data used to get to summaries; and 3) on the

subject of experience vs. data, he is concerned that the louder experiences are the ones that get the weight and wants to make sure we get good samples. Smith responded that the purpose of hearing stories of experience is to understand the “why” stories behind the data.

- Phil Goff said, don't forget about nuts and bolts recommendations, like where to close gaps in the sidewalk network, where crosswalks should be improved, bumpouts added, etc.
- Heather Barber noted she wants to make sure youth (teens and young adults in their 20s) are reached out to for involvement in the plan, along with other underrepresented voices. With so many middle and high school students traveling to school on MBTA buses, there's a huge opportunity to keep them interested in using public transportation going forward.
- Ali Carter noted that the frustrations in Arlington Heights are over lack of connection between the Bikeway and Mass Ave, frequent crashes at unsafe intersections, and a lack of activation at the bus terminal.
- Rachael Stark asked: Where are the teeth in the plan? How do we make it happen? Matt explained that ideally the STPAC becomes the implementation advocates for the plan and stewards it once the planning process is complete. Kien Ho also noted the need to connect the plan to the Capital Planning Process and to be aware of grant opportunities to help fund implementation of recommendations from the plan.
- Darcy Devney expressed concern about “dynamic” aspects that Smith mentioned in his presentation; the town is small and our goals are not profit oriented, so investing in infrastructure for things like Amazon lockers may not work in the long run, especially when dealing with profit-oriented, untrustworthy corporations. She also cited Waze as winning over Arlington's initiatives to improve street design. Smith said that by prioritizing transportation alternatives as a community value, the dominance of technology like Waze begins to lose importance.
- Adam Chapdelaine pointed out that as part of the override passed this year, there will be an annual sum of \$250k earmarked for transportation; \$200k for mobility improvements and \$50k for elderly/COA transportation. He also noted that large grant opportunities like MassWorks grants require larger housing and/or economic development projects, so thus far Arlington has not qualified for them.
- Diggins requested that the plan include mechanisms for staying involved with the Boston Region MPO so that Arlington is able to determine criteria for grant programs.
- Doug Mayo-Wells said he wanted to see recommendations for how to address problems that have not yet arisen, to be flexible to new challenges. Smith responded that this is where the town will need to have efficient processes in place for addressing policy quickly when new technology or advancements are brought to market.
- Stark reminded the group that the public sector and public resources belong to the public; that if corporations want to use public space they should have to pay for it.

- Shah noted she is looking for recommendations for how to develop partnerships around using Council on Aging vehicles in off-hours.

The group also discussed what type of outreach has worked in the past. It was noted that there will need to be a traditional town forum or there are some residents who will feel that we haven't done public engagement correctly. Interactive experiences such as walk shops work well with residents. Smith said that holding a large public meeting in May would be a good time to present on existing conditions.

6. Closing and Next Steps.

Smith said they will work with town staff on the final scope, the overall public outreach schedule, and start digging into existing conditions.